

**SECRET**

30 September 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR:

THROUGH:

FROM:

SUBJECT:

Comments on Memorandum of Conversation between  
Henry Cabot Lodge and Mr. Khrushchev and Other  
Statements made during the United States Visit

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SUMMARY

In general, Mr. Khrushchev's comments related to the field of guided missiles during his United States visit added very little if anything to our current knowledge. Such statements as were made are in accord with current estimates of the USSR guided missile and space program, and other formal and informal statements made by Khrushchev.

DISCUSSION

The following comments relate specifically to the conversations between Henry Cabot Lodge and Mr. Khrushchev:

a. We are unable to identify the missile Khrushchev had in mind in his comment that a Soviet scientist had perfected a rocket that hits the bull's eye on its first flight and that this perfection was the result of a new rocket engine that performed excellently on its first test. However, his comment is consistent with our knowledge of the Soviet 950 n.m. missile, which has an engine different from previous Soviet missiles, has been unusually reliable and generally accurate in test firings, and which appears to have reached operational status after an unusually brief period of development. It is doubtful that he was referring to the ICBM. In any case, his statement that the success of the engine reduced the development period by two years is unusual, since the development of the guidance system is normally the time-controlling factor. This could indicate the use of a tried and proven guidance system in the missile.

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The statement that the rocket engine performed excellently on its first test is not surprising or spectacular in view of the many years of Soviet experience in rocket engine development. Past speculation on the high reliability of Soviet missiles has centered on a superior propellant system or an excellent rocket engine. Khrushchev's statement lends credence to the latter, while intelligence indicates continued Soviet use of conventional propellants.

b. Khrushchev commented that rockets were wonderful -- you did not have to train people to navigate them. Although this is true in terms of navigation it certainly is not true of the training required for the other aspects of the missile system. The operational launching of a ballistic missile requires intensive individual and integrated crew training over a period of months, and this assumes a substantial level of preparation on the part of technicians prior to assignment in the missile field.

c. Khrushchev also commented that guided missiles could be stored simply and did not become obsolete or deteriorate. This statement is in general contrary to fact and is also a contradiction of past statements by Khrushchev on this subject. In May of 1959, Khrushchev stated that rockets were delicate things which are stored but need constant maintenance. The rapid pace of technological advance continues to make the obsolescence of missile systems and individual components a significant factor in weapon system programming.

The only other significant comments related to the Soviet guided missile and space program made by Mr. Khrushchev during his United States trip are as follows:

a. In Los Angeles Mr. Khrushchev commented, "as for the output of our rockets, those are on the assembly line". In the context of the ICBM, IRBM and many other Soviet missile programs this statement is probably true and is in accord with our current National Estimates. The statement is also consistent with Mr. Khrushchev's

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comments on ICBM production made in November 1958 and January 1959.

b. In conversation with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Mr. Khrushchev was asked by Senator Russell about moon shot failures which had been commented upon in the United States press with respect to remarks made by Mr. Nixon. Mr. Khrushchev explained that a rocket had been prepared and placed on the launching site but was later removed when it failed to check out properly. Another rocket was launched in its place and hit the moon. There is no evidence to confirm or deny Mr. Khrushchev's statement that one rocket was substituted for another, but he is correct in stating that only one vehicle was actually launched, [REDACTED]

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Prepared jointly by ORR and OSI

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